Summer Recreation Safety

Nothing says summer like some fun in the sun. This summer will be no different!

The walk to the PX will be more pleasant. The sun is shining and, for the most part, the skies will be clear. However, this clarity does not ensure pedestrian safety. Always wear your reflective belt or light-colored clothing so drivers can see you. Walk on sidewalks whenever possible. If there are none available, walk against the follow of traffic on the side of the road. Cross only at signalized intersections. Stay alert - never assume cars are going to stop when you are crossing the street.

If you are bicycling, stay to the right and travel with traffic. It is imperative that you wear a helmet and light-colored or reflective clothing. Not only do you have to be seen but your bike does as well. Bicycles should be outfitted with reflectors in the least and a head and tail light at the most.

Use your bicycle as it was intended. In 1999, two Team Lee Soldiers sustained permanent injuries as a result of bicycle accidents. One service member was performing moto-cross stunts on his son's mountain bike when the bike's front tire caught the ramp and threw him causing him to land on his back. The Soldier was not wearing any protective gear. He now spends his time in a Veterans Hospital in Tennessee as a quadriplegic. The other Soldier's condition was not as serious but he still suffers from effects to this day.

Basketball is a popular all-season sport. The availability of indoor courts guarantees this fact. However, in the summer, the games move outside. Before you play – whether indoors or out – check the court for any hazards such as uneven surfaces, dirt, water, or other obstructions. Verify whether the basket posts are padded in case of collisions. Also, be aware of other objects in your surroundings such as fences or bleachers. The proper gear is key to a win. To keep you jumping longer, wear footwear that supports your ankles. Also, mouth guards and eye shields are just as important.

Another popular summertime activity is camping. While some individuals may stay in a camper, many take pleasure in pitching a tent. Assess the area before you set-up camp. Look for animal and insect activity. The area you choose should be flat, clear of debris, and away from cliffs or ridges.

Besides wild animals, poisonous plants, and insects - one hazard of camping is the campfire. While it may be a place for friends and family to gather, it is the most unsafe place in the woods. Not only can the flames and embers cause burns, it can also start uncontrollable wild fires. To decrease the possibility of starting a major fire, dump a bucket of water or dirt on the fire to extinguish it. Continue to watch the fire pit for signs of smoldering.

Whether sitting around a campfire, catching a pick-up game or grabbing a bite at the PX, travel with care. Applying a few basic safety principles - such as wearing the right gear or familiarizing yourself with the rules of the game – does not have to ruin a good time. A few safety practices now will keep you going until the next round of fun Stay Active! - Be Safe!